

**1. In what ways do you think you have been successful in using a culturally responsive perspective in your work with your students?**

After learning more about what culturally responsive teaching can be, I've realized how little my classroom actually mirrored CRT. While I did a good job making content relevant to my students, my instruction was definitely not emancipatory by any stretch and didn't foster the conversations, learning outcomes, and actions that students in a truly culturally responsive classrooms are creating.

With that said, I think our unit on ATDPTI fostered conversations, writing products, and reflections that were responsive to my students' culture. I also think my interdisciplinary unit with our social studies teacher on WWII, *Night*, and the pyramid of hate also contained elements of culturally responsive teaching. I don't think, however, that I brought either unit to its full potential impact in terms of what outcomes and tangible steps my students were taking during and after these units in their everyday lives. I regret that because these steps could've solidified the responsiveness (and interconnectedness) between culture and classroom.

**2. How does your own identity play into your approach to being culturally responsive?**

If I could answer this question in its entirety, then I'd probably be on my way to being a culturally responsive teacher :) But seriously, I struggle with this question every day.

In terms of teaching --- during my second year in the classroom, I approached my role as someone with a set of skills I wanted to share with, and make meaningful for, the MKU School family... both because I cared deeply for my students and because I knew the skills I could cultivate in them were ones they could utilize the rest of their lives. I disclosed to them that I knew I could never fully "know" their culture, but I always looked for ways to learn more about it and welcomed opportunities to be brought into it. I thought that doing those two things and ignoring my own identity and background would allow me to be a culturally responsive teacher.

That was far from true. I had a lot to learn, and still do, about the ways my upbringing, family, and culture affected the concepts I chose to teach, the vehicle by which I taught them, the way I ran my classroom most of the time, and the way I viewed both the hindrances and assets facing my students and their families. Undoubtedly, the way I was raised to view and value ideas like success, independence, community, competition affected how I taught my classroom and how I operate today. While I've been seeking to understand them a lot more since joining TFA and now being on staff, I wish I was more upfront with my own culture in my classroom, and other cultures aside from my students', in order to best serve them.